

FLORENCE TOWNSHIP COUNCIL EXECUTIVE SESSION

May 10, 2017

8:00PM

CALL TO ORDER & FLAG SALUTE

Council President Lovenduski called the meeting to order and led the Salute to the Flag.

SUNSHINE STATEMENT

The Opening Statement was read by the Acting Township Clerk: Notice was sent to Trenton Times for information; posted on the municipal bulletin board; placed on the web-site on January 5, 2017. Notice was advertised in the Burlington Co. Times on January 8, 2017.

ROLL CALL

Present: Frank Baldorossi, Paul Ostrander, Jerry Sandusky, Ted Lovenduski

Absent: David Woolston

Also present: Mayor Craig H. Wilkie; Richard A. Brook, Township Administrator; Thomas A. Sahol, Assistant Municipal Administrator; Kelly Grant, Esq., Township Attorney; Nancy Erlston, Acting Township Clerk

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Council President Lovenduski opened the meeting to the public.

Seeing no one wishing to be heard, it was the Motion of Ostrander, seconded by Sandusky to close the public comments.

BUSINESS

COAH – Affordable Housing Agreement

- **BCCAP**

Mayor Wilkie said the township has an agreement with BCCAP concerning the Roebling Inn. It was part of the original Affording Housing Plan that was created in the late eighties. It was a local establishment that was going into disrepair and had a lot of police activity. The administration at that time purchased the property. The plan was to renovate the building. BCCAP completed the renovations and the building was then occupied. Because of funding issues there were things that were not completed. One of those things was windows. He remembered walking through at the grand opening and seeing the original windows were still there. When the Duffy Manor opened recently people told home they were hoping to go there from the Roebling in because the windows were so bad. There have also been some issues over the last couple of years with the upkeep of the property. The township spoke to BCCAP about working together. The township will help with affordable housing funds and BCCAP will provide additional units for future credits for COAH.

Florence Township Council Executive Session 5/10/17

BCCAP met with the Historic Preservation Commission last week and reviewed what was proposed. The commission was in agreement. The township is ready to move forward with an agreement with BCCAP concerning the proposed renovations that will provide fourteen COAH credits for this round and another fourteen in 2025.

Administrator Brook said another important factor is that it will improve and enhance an old building that is part of the fabric of the community. It will make it more livable for the seniors who live there. He believes when a town can provide reasonable and quality affordable housing for seniors it has done a good thing.

- **Salt & Light**

Mayor Wilkie said Salt & Light is another affordable housing advocate that has been working in the community. They had approvals for four units at 111 Norman Avenue. The township has had discussions with Salt & Light and it has agreed to work on ten different units within the community. They would be single family homes that would be long term rentals. It would not be transitional housing. The township agreed to purchase 111 Norman Avenue from Salt & Light. There were approvals for four family units but then Salt & Light wanted to put eight single units there. The township plans to demolish the structure and work to improve the quality of life in the neighborhood. The township will work with Salt & Light on ten different locations within the community.

Administrator Brook said affordable housing could mean someone who has a child with Downs Syndrome, someone who is deaf, an adult or a young individual with learning or mental disabilities, that is what affordable housing is about. The township just met with a company located in the community and they indicated to the Mayor and Council that they have deaf people who work for them and they provide ADA accommodations for them. That is part of what affordable housing is about. People are looking for housing for themselves and their families. Both agreements will be on the next agenda.

Water & Sewer Engineer

- **Well No. 6 Future Redevelopment**

Administrator Brook said the township has been moving forward to have Alaimo Associates go out to bid to redevelop Well No. 6. Two wells have been done within the past two years. This would be the third to be redeveloped. It would improve the overall capacity of the well to pump water from the aquifer. That would be done in the fall of this year. Well No. 6 is the workhorse of all the wells. It is located on Broad Street by the ball fields. Every couple of years the townships does what is called a Well Maintenance Inspection Report. The report came on Well No. 6 that it is beginning to lose some of its capacity. It would be good for the township to put that well into the rotation to do the work over the winter. It would be preferable to not take it out of service over the summer, fall or early spring.

Florence Township Council Executive Session 5/10/17

The township will do a bond ordinance for Well No. 6 and Alaimo would go out to bid in October or November and award the contract on November or December and hopefully have the work done in February.

Administrator Brook said the well is down about twenty one percent of capacity. Now is the time to plan. All of the wells will have been redeveloped. Once the state issues the permit the township will go out to bid for Phase I of the Water Plant improvements. After that Phase II would be done in 2018. During the process the township would be looking at a significant expansion to the plant. The goal has been to phase the debt service in such a way that it minimizes the impact to the rate payers. There will be a resolution on next week's agenda.

- **Sludge Dewatering Building Odor Control Upgrade –
Change Order No. 1, Current Estimate No. 5 - Final**

Administrator Brook explained this was odor control equipment that was installed by the township at the request of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. The amount is \$10,280.00. Alaimo has recommended approval and the Director of Water & Sewer agrees. A resolution will be on the next agenda.

Assistant Municipal Administrator

- **Roebeling Park Committee Final Recommendations**

Assistant Administrator Sahol said this was a committee created by the Mayor. There were about twelve members with different levels of interest. There was community involvement. He provided a bullet point list that indicated what people were interested in seeing at the new expansion area. There were some really nice ideas and reuse of some of the existing infrastructure. One idea was using the rail posts as the base of a pavilion. Additional parking will be necessary. That was included in the application for the Burlington County Park Grant. It would be along Riverside Avenue. There has always been conversation regarding a fishing pier. It is a much easier access point along the river because it is not washed as hard as the riverfront in other areas. There is somewhat of a pier near the old water inlets that can be a base point to work from. The amphitheater is a gutsy endeavor. It could be something as simple as what Burlington City enjoys or it could be something as extravagant as what Burlington County has. It is a neat idea and would be an awesome venue for music or any type of event overlooking the river as the sun set. It is a gorgeous setting and it always has a nice breeze. There would be some seating and possibly a boat ramp utilizing where the EPA once had a temporary ramp set up. There would also be the normal park things like trees and dog waste stations and potentially restroom type facilities, additional paths and night time lighting. Another good idea was grilling stations. In the late eighties there were grilling stations at Wilkie Park. It might be a good spot if there was some tree covering creating grove areas where people could go and enjoy a family picnic. The Mayor wanted to make sure that the governing body saw what the committee put forward. The community was well represented.

Mayor Wilkie said he wanted to be sure Council was updated on the committee's suggestions. He thanked Councilman Baldorossi for attending the committee meetings, his input was quite valuable.

Florence Township Council Executive Session 5/10/17

He wanted it on the record that the township has been meeting with developers and this report would be provided to them so they can understand some of the intent the township has. A conversation he had with the committee was to utilize the opportunity being right on the river. He wanted that jewel to be utilized.

- **Cream-O-Land Property Conveyance**

Assistant Administrator Sahol said this conversation goes back about eight months. Cream-O-Land owns a property between the First Industrial site and Morris Court. It looks like it once was a potential rail spur property. They have no need for it and it would be nearly impossible for them to develop it. They would like to donate the land to the municipality. They are asking for an eighth of an acre parcel that they have land locked between their property across the street and the Turnpike. All it would really do is square off their property. They do keep a very nice property and they will be able to maintain it. They have done everything they needed to do and now have the ability to convey the parcel to the township. If all are in agreement he would begin working on an ordinance with the Township Solicitor. All were in agreement. Mayor Wilkie said it is a good thing for the community to acquire the property. At some point in the future it could be used for parking relief for the residents of Morris Court.

- **Surplus Equipment for Auction – Spring 2017**

Assistant Administrator Sahol said periodically the township auctions surplus municipal equipment, or equipment that is no longer useable for municipal function. There are only three items but two of them are sizeable. One is the bin of scrap that has built up at the Water & Sewer Department. Another is a 1998 dump truck that is in worse than poor condition. The last is a 2007 Impala. It has high mileage and it has been nickel and diming the town. If approved there would be a resolution prepared for the next meeting. All were in agreement.

Township Administrator

- **Request to Vacate Holly Street**

Administrator Brook said there was a request in the packet from some residents asking if the township would vacate Holly Street. It runs off Delaware Avenue. The township would need to make sure there are no municipal utilities. He doesn't believe that there are. The property would be divided evenly between the adjacent properties. They would then maintain it and be responsible for it. Administrator Brook said they understand they can't infringe on the county right-of-way. Councilman Sandusky asked who would be responsible for the fees involved. Administrator Brook said he would explain to the interested parties that they would be responsible for the fees involved. There was discussion of the costs involved. All were in agreement to move forward.

Administrator Brook said there were some other topics he would like to discuss.

He said this is the time of year that the Chief Financial Officer works with Bond Council in preparing Tax Anticipation Notes. To minimize doing estimated bills to property owners, the township borrows money on the short term with the Tax Anticipation Notes and when the tax funds are received it is paid off.

Florence Township Council Executive Session 5/10/17

Some towns prefer estimated bills, but in the third quarter the bills would need to be adjusted. This will probably be on the June 21st agenda.

The Township Engineer has provided the estimates for the drainage work at Front and Chestnut Streets. A bond ordinance is being prepared for the next meeting. There would also be a resolution authorizing the work. Hopefully the bid will be awarded in late June or July so the work can be done in August before school begins. Assistant Administrator Sahol is doing an examination of the riverbank for any additional stabilization work that could be done at the same time.

Water & Sewer is installing a water line that is part of the road improvement program. Assistant Administrator Sahol said the township is paving many streets this year. One of those is the 800 Block of West Second Street. It runs from Foundry Street to Union Street. The water main there is a dead end at the present time. The Water & Sewer Department has taken it upon themselves to plan the project. They will be tapping the main on Foundry and Union Streets and will install an eight inch new water main so it is no longer a dead end. They will be connecting new services from that main to the curbstops for each homeowner. The residents will have much better water pressure and the quality of their service will be improved. Mayor Wilkie asked if the curbs and sidewalks were going to be done and if the Shade Tree Commission was going to look to do some plantings. Assistant Administrator Sahol said the curbs and ADA compliance would be addressed and the Shade Tree Commission will be recommending some planting.

The Shade Tree Commission has a gutsy project they are taking on. They are planning next Wednesday and Thursday to do some plantings on Woodlawn Avenue and Oak Street. The materials already started to arrive. They will most likely do a fall planting as well.

Administrator Brook said he received some calls this morning from residents who live on McHugh Court. The railroad is doing significant safety improvements to the tracks. It is very loud and disturbing to the residents. The township is frustrated that it was not informed before the work started. It would have made the homeowners aware also. The township understands it is a safety concern but would have appreciated some notice. Residents were being woken up in the early morning hours and they have a right to be concerned and upset. The township just found out about it today and it will be continuing for another two days. It is because of a problem with the shifting of the tracks. When this is done the township will send a letter to NJ Transit requesting they notify the municipality in the future so it can let residents know.

Administrator Brook said over the past year the township has been looking at the high end of the Water & Sewer rate structure, those whose use is in the millions. Users of that size help to keep the rate system stable. He doesn't remember the last time there was a significant rate increase in the Water & Sewer rate structure. The township's rates compared to others in the county are low. He suggested lowering the rate. The rate is getting to point where it becomes a disincentive. The municipality wants to keep the large users here. It won't hurt the utility because in all likelihood the users will increase their volume output. In the end it is extremely productive and positive for the Water & Sewer utility system.

Florence Township Council Executive Session 5/10/17

Mayor

Mayor Wilkie said this Friday is the Officer Walter Kotch Memorial Service at noon in front of the municipal building.

Saturday is the annual Relay for Life at the high school from 11am – 11pm. The weather might not cooperate so he doesn't know what the plans are at this point.

He wished all the mothers a Happy Mother's Day. Next Wednesday night is the High School Spring Concert so he doesn't know if he will be able to attend the Council meeting.

He noted the county is going to begin filling in the washout along the river on East Front Street. There is going to be a barge coming in to do the work. Council President Lovenduski said he believed he saw the work being done today.

Block Party Request

Council President Lovenduski said there is a request for a block party at 19 Winter Street. It is for a graduation party. He is concerned about the idea of blocking a street for someone's private party. It isn't really a block party that pertains to the rest of the residents on the street.

Acting Clerk Erlston spoke to Police Chief John Bunce. He spoke to the resident. Chief Bunce initially had the same thoughts as Council President Lovenduski. He learned that there are no other homes in the area. No one would be unable to reach their residence by blocking off the area. The resident wanted to use the space for a portable toilet and extra seating. The Chief did not object. Councilman Baldorossi asked if it was a high school or college graduation. Council President Lovenduski said it was for a high school graduation. All were in agreement to approve the request.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Council President Lovenduski opened the meeting to the public.

John Chester, 15 Abrams Drive, asked when the Farmer's Market would be back. Assistant Administrator Sahol said it would be returning on June 22. It was posted on the Township Calendar.

Mr. Chester said with COAH, is there any group that helps the township fill the units. There are empty properties and he wondered if they could be used. Administrator Brook said it is possible they will be changed from owner occupied to rental. The township has been exploring and would love to explore further the possibility of veterans housing. It would be a tremendous way for the township to meet its affordable housing obligation and do something good for society.

It was the Motion of Ostrander, seconded by Sandusky to close the public comment. All ayes.

Florence Township Council Executive Session 5/10/17

ADJOURNMENT

8:34 PM MOTION of Sandusky and seconded by Ostrander to adjourn to closed session. Roll call vote – all ayes. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy L. Erlston
Acting Township Clerk
/aek